In the 2024 Republican presidential primaries in the U.S., over 22.2 million people voted in a nation of 340 million—approximately 6.5% of the population.

By contrast, 104, 552 people voted in the 2013 Liberal leadership race—as Canada had a population of just over 35 million at the time, those 104, 552 people made up just *0.3%* of Canada's population.

More specifically, 81, 389 out of those 104, 552 people were single-handedly responsible for putting Justin Trudeau in charge of the most successful political machine in Canadian history - one that has been in power for almost 60% of the time Canada has been a country.

Despite the historical prowess of the Liberal Party, the 2013 Liberal leadership election was, nevertheless, a race to control the reigns of a third-place party that had received just 19% of the vote in the last election. When Trudeau first rose in the House of Commons as Liberal leader for the first time, he rose from a seat far along the opposition benches towards the bar of the chamber.

The winner of the ongoing Liberal leadership, however, will (theoretically) occupy[1] the 11th seat from the speaker on the front row of the government side of the house - in other words, the *Prime Minister's* chair.

This means that a tiny fraction of the Canadian population, a fraction that holds views well to the left of the average person, will choose the most powerful person in the country.

If that isn't undemocratic, then I don't know what is.

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Now, you may ask, isn't it completely insignificant who replaces Trudeau as Prime Minister, as that person will almost certainly lose an election two months later? Is picking the next Charles Tupper really all that important?

But, you see, the person who wins this leadership race could be more similar to Joe Clark—or even Paul Martin—than Charles Tupper in terms of the time he/she will spend in the top job.

If Jagmeet Singh gets cold feet (as he frequently does) and refuses to support a no-confidence vote, the next Prime Minister would, most likely, last until the fixed election date in October. Right?

Not necessarily.

As Sean Spear wrote in *The Hub:*

> But if we're entertaining hypothetical scenarios, it's possible for a Carney- or Freeland-led government to more controversially go beyond the fixed election date. The four-year fixed election date in October 2025 is set out in the Elections Canada Act. But as Carleton University professor Philippe Lagassé recently explained at *The Hub*, the Constitution only requires an election every five years. The government could therefore amend or repeal the legislated election date or possibly even ignore it altogether.

It is worth saying that this scenario is highly unlikely. Amending the *Canada Elections Act* to eliminate the fixed election date would require the support of one opposition party *and* a majority of the Senate. Since this change would be made purely for cynical, partisan reasons, I have a hard time imagining that any other political party (or a majority of Senators) would agree to this. Ignoring the fixed election date, meanwhile, would cause a constitutional crisis.

There is also the question of what this would to the popularity of a government that already enjoys anemic levels of support. As Sean Spear explains:

> Extending the government beyond the four-year term limit would no doubt be contentious. It would arguably be even more controversial if Carney was the prime minister given that he wouldn't at least start with a seat in the House of Commons. As a matter of politics, it would therefore be a high-risk strategy—one that could even do greater damage to the government's already poor political standing.

However, there are still potential incentives for a future Prime Minister to attempt this gambit:

> But if the new prime minister faces mere days or weeks before an election campaign, it may be viewed as a worthwhile bet compared to the alternative. Presumably, the political gamble would be that the short-term opprobrium would eventually be offset by the potential gains. Maybe the government uses the extra time to provide some budget goodies or secure a deal with the Trump administration or

even permit the Conservatives to succumb to their own unforced errors.

If, god forbid, this scenario unfolds, this new Prime Minister - chosen by less than 1% of Canada's population—could remain in office for *one year and seven months.*

That's *one year and seven months* of being governed by someone who has never won a federal election.

This is where taking out a Liberal membership comes in.

By taking out a Liberal membership, you are giving yourself a say in both who the next Prime Minister will be *and* who will lead the Liberal Party into the next election.

I would, personally, prefer that Canada adopt an American-style primary system for choosing both party leaders and candidates for the House of Commons.

This would give the wider Canadian public more of a say in choosing party leaders—leaders that are often quite powerful, given the top-down, hierarchical nature of our political parties. It would also prevent leadership elections from being hijacked by special interest groups whose goals are irrelevant—or actively hostile—to the interests of the common people.

In the absence of such a system, however, taking out party memberships whenever leadership elections are held is the best course of action.

Although becoming a member of the Liberal Party is relatively easy, there are still several requirements one must meet to be eligible to take out a membership:

> To be eligible for Registration in the Party, a person must:
>
> (a) be at least fourteen (14) years of age;
>
> (b) support the purposes of the Party;

(c) be a Canadian citizen, have status under the Indian Act, or be a permanent resident of Canada;

(d) not be a member of any other federal political party in Canada; and

(e) while Registered as a Liberal, not have publicly declared an intention to be a candidate for election to the House of Commons other than as a candidate of the Party.

Now, if you're reading this post, I assume you're at least fourteen years of age and have Canadian citizenship (or permanent residency, for that matter).

And unless you're part of the Longest Ballot Committee, I doubt you'll be running in the next federal election.

However, if you're a member of the CPC or PPC (I assume my audience is right-leaning, although NDPers could be reading) this article will sadly be irrelevant to you.

With all of that taken care of, we are left with the clause that states one must “support the purposes of the party” in order to be eligible to register.

What the “purposes of the party” exactly are, however, isn’t specified.

Due to the nebulous nature of this phrase, it is fair game to use the ambiguity present here to your own advantage.

For example, I would say that the “[purpose] of the party” is to be absolutely shellacked by the Conservatives in the next election, and then spend years (or even decades) moldering in opposition.

Now that you have (hopefully) decided to register as a “Liberal”, it is worth considering who you should vote for.

The Liberal Party uses a ranked ballot system, which will make your decision easier if you are undecided—or simply hate all of the candidates.

If you conclude that you are primarily choosing the next *Prime Minister,* then Mark Carney would be a better choice; his robust financial

experience and relative lack of involvement in Trudeau's government would make him decent at managing the day-to-day affairs of the nation—in comparison to Freeland, of course. Carney would also be a better choice for people who want Liberals to return to a more fiscally responsible form of governance—or at least want Trudeau's drunken orgy of spending to be toned down a bit.

However, if your main motivation for voting in this contest is to select the weakest possible leader for the party, Chrystia Freeland is your candidate. Her condescending communication style and abysmal track record as Finance Minister could very well lead to her pulling off a Kim Campbell-esque performance in the next federal election.

Personally, as I am very far ideologically from the Liberal Party as it currently exists, want to see the party get clobbered in the next election, and am somewhat skeptical of Carney's technocratic centrism, I plan to cast my ballot for Freeland (I might rank Chandra Arya 2nd, though, if he manages to raise the $350, 000 necessary to run).

Would the Liberal Party approve of me encouraging randos on Substack to take out party memberships so they can vote for the weakest candidate in this leadership race? Probably not. But, after all the Liberals have done over the last nine years to weaken and damage our country, do I really care about getting approval from them? You wouldn't be surprised to learn that the answer is a firm and unequivocal "no".

The deadline for buying a Liberal Party membership is January 27th, so don't miss out!

1

There is a strong chance that Mark Carney, if he wins the leadership, will not occupy a seat in the House of Commons before the next election. This is because the Liberal leadership vote is scheduled for March 9th - just two weeks before the prorogation of Parliament ends. If a Liberal MP gave up their seat the day after Carney's win, there is a required 11-day period between vacating that seat and the writ dropping for a by-election. Then, the minimum campaign period for a by-election is 36 days. Therefore, the earliest possible date for Carney to be elected to the House of Commons is April 19th. With Jagmeet Singh promising that the NDP will vote no-confidence in the government as soon as Parliament returns on March 24th, there is a definite possibility that Carney will rise for the

first in the House of Commons as leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition - provided the Liberals win more seats than the Bloc Quebecois and Carney stays on as Liberal leader after his near-certain defeat.